

## Boost Your UV:IQ

Think fast: is it healthy to “**get some sun?**” The answer may surprise you.

While there are certainly benefits from limited sun exposure – primarily that the UV (ultraviolet) rays found in sunlight stimulate the body to produce vitamin D – unprotected exposure to the sun, even for a short amount of time, can severely damage your health. This makes it crucial to take appropriate precautions to protect yourself when out in the sun, no matter how safe you think you may be.

### THE SUNBURN - SKIN CANCER CONNECTION

If you think getting a sunburn occasionally is no big deal, you should think again. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, a person's risk for melanoma – the most serious form of skin cancer – doubles if he or she has had five or more sunburns in their life. Yet despite this fact, more people are being sunburned than ever before: a recent Skin Cancer Foundation survey found 42 percent of people polled were sunburned at least once a year.

### DANGEROUS EVEN WITHOUT A BURN

While the clearest sign of potentially cancer-causing skin damage is sunburn, you do not need to get a burn to acquire skin damage.

The sun's UVB rays may cause burns, but the lesser known UVA rays are capable of causing accelerated skin aging and skin cancer without burning the skin's surface.

### SUN EXPOSURE AND EYE DAMAGE

Much like a sunburn on the skin, sunlight reflected from surfaces like sand or water can actually burn the surface of the eye. Over time, repeated sun exposure can penetrate the structures of our eyes and cause cell damage which can lead to eye disease and vision loss. Just as with our skin, the danger to our eyes from UV light is directly related to the duration of sun exposure and to how much protection we provide our eyes.

### A HEAD TO TOE PROTECTION STRATEGY

Wear protective clothing, including a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses that block glare and 100% of UV rays (wrap-around shades protect your eyes from all angles). Apply an ounce sunscreen that is at least SPF 15 once every two hours, and stay in the shade during peak sun hours (10 a.m.-4 p.m.).

You can learn more tips and test your UV:IQ online at [www.FOH.hhs.gov/UVIQ](http://www.FOH.hhs.gov/UVIQ).

The risk of sun damage can vary by person, so talk to your health care provider about the best sun protection options for you. □



# Summer Vacation Cardio

If you're going on vacation this summer, you don't have to take a break from keeping fit.

Actually, a summer vacation can be the perfect time to start working out: you have extra time, you can get more rest, and the weather is ideal for outdoor activities. When you start a workout routine during vacation, it doesn't have to compete with regular time constraints and stress. This makes it surprisingly easy to integrate the routine into your daily life once vacation's over.

One of the most important aspects of a fitness routine is cardiovascular exercise – activities involving large muscle groups that get the lungs working and the blood pumping oxygen to the heart. Senior exercise physiologist for IDEA Health and Fitness Association Len Kravitz, PhD, says “cardio” exercises provide tremendous health benefits: reduced risk of heart disease and osteoporosis, lowered blood cholesterol/triglyceride levels, improved muscle mass, and burned calories, to name a few.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults get just two and a half hours (150 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity physical activity. That's not as daunting as it may sound. You can spread it out nearly any way you want; for example, by taking a brisk 10-minute walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week. Walking, jogging, swimming, biking, or even gardening can increase the workload of your heart and lungs.

Vacation settings often provide opportunities for non-traditional types of cardio. Here are some suggestions on how to add fun cardio workouts to your summer getaway schedule:

## GET FIT AT THE LAKE

Canoeing provides a full body workout. The motions of rowing and turning the boat provide great cardio while sculpting your shoulders, abs, and back. Use paddles at each side of the boat to balance your muscles, or target your oblique muscles by using one paddle and alternating strokes on each side of the boat.

## STAY TONED IN THE MOUNTAINS

Mountain hiking provides great slow-burn cardio. Make sure to wear durable hiking boots with ankle support to avoid painful ankle sprains and to help protect your ankles from poison ivy. Using rubber-tipped hiking poles can engage your upper body muscles while taking some of the strain off your knees. And, the longer your strides, the more toned your quads, glutes, and calf muscles will become.

## BREAK A SWEAT AT THE BEACH

Walking on the sand provides more resistance than a paved path or a treadmill. Walking, running, sprinting, or playing Frisbee, football, or volleyball while barefoot on the beach also boosts both balance and ankle stability.

Try out these activities on your next vacation. You should come home fitter and feeling better than ever. □





# The Downside of Staying Up

Do you habitually feel so sleepy that you have to revive yourself throughout the day? If so, you may suffer from chronic sleep loss.

While tiredness is uncomfortable, the health consequences associated with chronic sleep loss are much more significant and potentially life-threatening. The National Institutes of Health says sleep-related problems affect up to 70 million Americans, who face health consequences that include hypertension, diabetes, obesity, depression, heart attack, and stroke. That means getting enough sleep is not a luxury – it is a necessity. It should be considered a vital aspect of maintaining good health.

Although there are many types of sleep disorders, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says four major disorders affect a majority of Americans. They are insomnia, an inability to initiate or maintain sleep; narcolepsy, excessive daytime sleepiness combined with sudden muscle weakness; Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS), an unpleasant “creeping” sensation, often feeling like it is originating in the

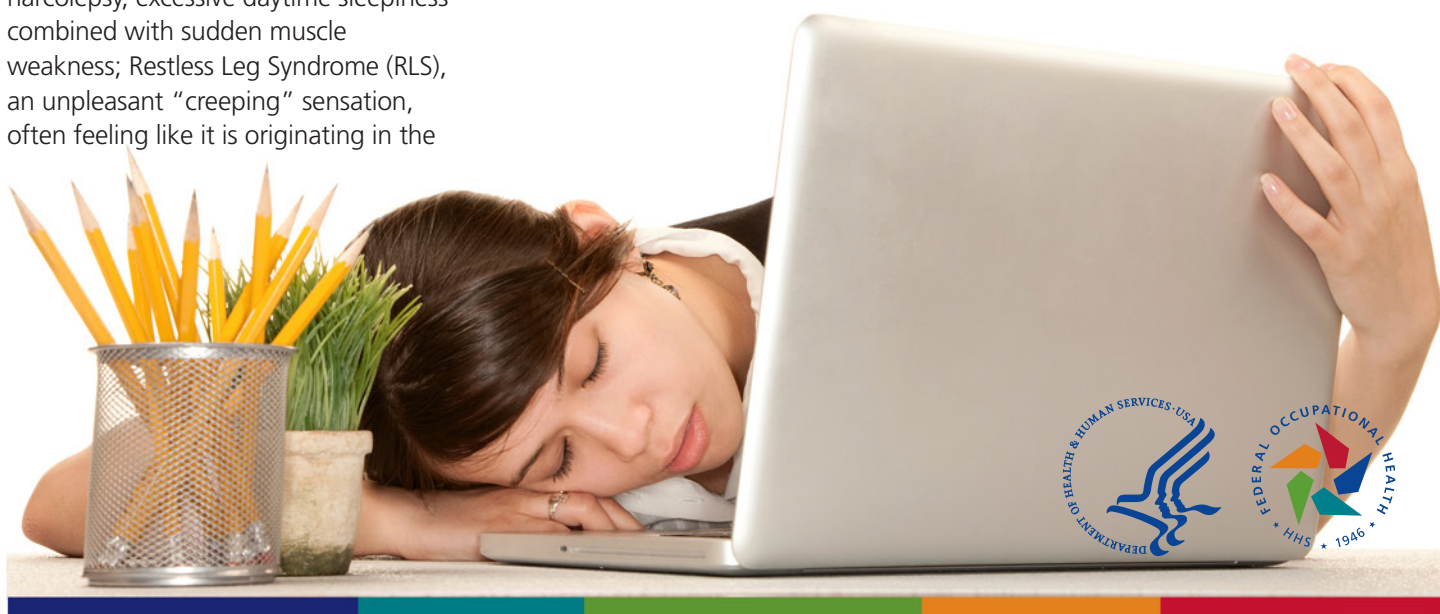
lower legs; and sleep apnea, where sleep is interrupted by abnormal pauses in breathing or shallow breathing. If you think you might suffer from one of these conditions, a thorough examination by your health care provider can potentially help identify the causes and determine appropriate treatment strategies.

If you don't suffer from an identified disorder, but simply don't get enough sleep, it is important to identify how much sleep you actually need. Generally, most healthy adults need an average of eight hours of sleep per night. However, some individuals are able to function without sleepiness after as little as six hours of sleep, while others can't perform at their peak unless they've slept ten hours.

In order to perform at your best, it is important to determine your personal sleep needs. You can do this by assessing how you feel after getting different amounts of sleep.

Once you identify specifically how many hours of sleep you need, don't cut yourself short of sleep any more than you would cut yourself short of the nutrition you need. Fortunately, there are strategies to help improve your sleep habits. The following are the National Sleep Foundation's recommendations for better sleep. Pleasant dreams!

1. Go to bed at the same time each night and rise at the same time each morning.
2. Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment, which is neither too hot nor too cold.
3. Make sure your bed is comfortable and try to use it only for sleeping and not for other activities, such as watching TV or going online.
4. Physical activity may help promote sleep, but not within a few hours of bedtime.
5. Avoid large meals before bedtime. □



# A New “SPF”: Skin-Protecting Foods

While you still have to wear sunscreen, researchers have discovered that some of the foods we eat may help protect our skin from potentially cancerous summer sun.

Various health experts are adamant about the role of foods in reducing the risk of skin cancer. In a study from the International Journal of Epidemiology, one such expert, Cristina Fortes, claims that a diet full of plant-foods – especially fruits, vegetables and fresh herbs, as well as fish and olive oil – reduces an individual’s risk of the deadliest type of skin cancer, melanoma, by 50 percent. The explanation for such powerful protection? Certain foods are abundant in antioxidants, which may help block the dangerous effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays.

## UV RAYS, FREE RADICALS, AND CANCER

When skin cells are exposed to carcinogens, such as UV radiation from the sun, unstable oxygen molecules called “free radicals” may form. Free radicals can attack other molecules and damage the cell’s DNA, which mutates the cell, according to the National Cancer Institute. Once the cell’s genetic material is mutated, it may cause the cell to divide uncontrollably, potentially allowing for the development of a malignant tumor.

## THE POWER OF ANTIOXIDANTS

Research suggests antioxidants can provide some defense against potentially cancer-causing free radicals. According to research conducted by

Dr. Nina Shapiva of Tel Aviv University’s School of Health Professions, in a group of people that were exposed to the sun for three to six hours a day, those who drank an antioxidant rich beverage had half as many free radicals in their blood after two weeks as those who didn’t consume the drink. This strong correlation suggests antioxidants have the power to reign in free radicals.

What does all this mean? It means that making small changes in your diet to incorporate healthy, antioxidant-rich foods can help protect you (and your skin) from the damaging free radicals formed with exposure to UV rays. So this summer, try a new kind of SPF: Skin-Protective Foods. Here are a few easy ways to do so.

## SAY YES TO FRUITS AND VEGGIES

Incorporate antioxidant-rich nutrition in your diet by eating dark leafy greens like spinach and collard greens; cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower; and citrus fruits like grapefruit and pineapple. Also try foods containing carotenoids, a powerful antioxidant that produces an orange color in plants like oranges, carrots, and pumpkins. Finally, remember that by adding these colors, flavors, and fantastic tastes to your meals you are also adding powerful weapons to your body’s cancer-fighting arsenal. □

